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ABSTRACT

The Mid-York Library System (Utica, New York) conducted a project that involved recruitment and public awareness. The project served a community of over 200,000 people, and targeted potential tutors and learners. The goal of the project was to produce and develop a sustained publicity project to promote the services of Literacy Volunteers of Mid-York. The emphasis was on television and radio commercials, but also included print advertisements that coordinated with the other publicity. The report discusses the creation of the promotional materials, and their impact on the literacy program. (SWC)

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Mid-York Library System, Final Performance Report for Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title VI, Library Literacy Program

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FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT
TITLE VI
LIBRARY LITERACY PROGRAM

PROGRAM YEAR OCTOBER 1992 - SEPTEMBER 1993

GRANTEE :	Mid-York Library System 1600 Lincoln Ave Utica, New York 13502
PROJECT TITLE :	Literacy Program Promotion
PROJECT DIRECTOR :	Ann D. Harris Telephone : 315-735-8328
GRANT NUMBER :	R167A20330
AMOUNT AWARDED :	$22,712.00
AMOUNT EXPENDED :	$22,712.00

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT
for
LITERACY PROGRAM PROMOTION

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The goal of this project was to produce and develop a sustained publicity project to promote the services of Literacy Volunteers of Mid-York. The emphasis was on television and radio commercials, but also included print ads that coordinated with the other publicity. SAMPLES OF EACH OF THE RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMERCIALS AND COPIES OF THE PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS ARE INCLUDED WITH THIS REPORT.

TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

Two television commercials were produced with money from this grant. The production was contracted to Warner Advertising of Clinton, NY. We have worked with this firm in the past. They seem to be the only local advertising agency interested in working with public service agencies. The contact person for Warner was Greg McShea. Greg had met with the Literacy Staff in the past and was familiar with the mission of the Literacy program. Greg met several times with the Literacy Coordinator, Cynthia Barns and the Project Coordinator, Ann Harris. We brainstormed ideas and came up with a concept that we wanted the viewer to receive in 30 seconds. This idea developed into a "crisis message" type format. We wanted to create messages that would say, "What crisis might be precipitated in someone's daily life if that person was a non-reader?"

After exploring several ideas, two emerged as the most workable. The first idea developed into the commercial entitled "Road Trip". The commercial shows a person driving a car at night in the rain. The viewer is looking through the windshield with the driver as a road sign emerges that reads "BRIDGE OUT, USE ALTERNATE ROUTE". The next sound the viewer hears is the sound of squealing tires. The second idea developed into the commercial entitled "Baby Medicine". A mother is comforting a sick child and reaches into the medicine cabinet for a bottle of cough syrup. The commercial ends with the mother looking into the camera after staring, uncomprehending, at the instructions on the bottle. The slogan "Life is Too Important for Guessing Games" closes each vignette, before the viewer is given the information about the Literacy Volunteers program. I'm sure you will agree, on viewing, that the message is effective. A copy of each script is included with the final report.

The next step was the actual production of the commercials. Warner Advertising chose a production company in the Rochester area (CGI) to shoot the commercials. We were invited to attend the shooting of "Baby Medicine" in Rochester. One of the members of the Literacy staff was invited to be one of the actors for the scene that is seen at the end of both of the commercials, which was also shot in Rochester. The other actors were chosen and employed by the production company. The production took place in Rochester in February 1993.

The production of two 30-second television commercials cost $9,597.19. This is money that the library system or the Literacy program would never have been able to afford for public relations. Everyone knows that public relations is an integral part of the program, but it is also regularly neglected because of financial circumstances.

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The next step in the project was to schedule the airing of the commercials on various networks in our local viewing area. Having Warner as the "broker" for this service was incredibly helpful, because our viewing area is divided into several cable services that have varying rates, schedules and networks. Warner was able to work through Metrobase Cable which coordinates the television cable advertising for the area. Starting in February 1993, the commercials ran on ESPN, CNN, and TNN. Time was also purchased on our local NBC affiliate, WKTV, and also on our local ABC affiliate, WUTR. By purchasing air time, we were able to control the times and dates of the publicity. The television stations rotated the "Road Trip" commercial with the "Baby Medicine" one. We coordinated our media blitzes with upcoming workshops. Each workshop that was held during the publicity campaign trained at least 10 new tutors, which were immediately matched with waiting students. The advantage of this process is that the network runs the commercials during prime time, when we purchase the air time, instead of at odd times, when PSA's are worked in during "dead" viewing times. Coordinating the media campaign also allowed us to avail ourselves of "specials", often resulting in free air time.

The response from the general public was quite astounding, but not measurable. Many people who saw the commercials commented on the professional quality and effectiveness of the message. We did get some direct student referrals, but so many of our referrals come from family members or agencies that it is difficult to discern precisely who first heard about the program and who was the original referral. Our staff member was often stopped on the street or in the grocery store with the "Didn't I see you on television?" line. Phones were always busier when the commercials were running, an indication that the word was getting out. See the attached media schedule for an example of the coverage that was made possible by this grant.

The final chapter of the television commercials is still being written. In September 1993, Warner Advertising contacted Fox/Lorber, the video distributor for the movie "My Brother's Keeper", which is a local story. We wanted to invite someone involved in the production of the movie to speak at LVA/Mid-York's annual recognition dinner. In the course of the conversation, Greg referred to our commercials and, as a result, Fox/Lorber has put the commercial "Road Trip" at the beginning of all the videos that it distributes. Warner Advertising contacted LVA National to ask permission to include their phone number on the film. Warner then edited the film, free of charge, to reflect the national LVA phone number and was promised mention by the national organization. We have just received the national newsletter from Literacy Volunteers. It includes an article about the commercial on the videos, with no mention of LVA/Mid-York, Warner Advertising, or that it was produced with LSCA Title VI funds. The Literacy Coordinator has written a letter of protest and asked for credit in the next edition of the newsletter. A copy of the article is attached.

We think the national recognition is the most significant result of this project. The project caused a ripple effect that will end up "getting the word out" to local and national audiences on a regular basis. The commercials will still be used on our local networks, but as PSA's, since funding has run out.

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OTHER MEDIA

Creating and airing radio and newspaper advertising comprised the rest of the media campaign. Warner created parallel radio announcements that ran on the local radio stations at the same time that we were running the commercials on television. We selected WIBX-AM, a popular all-news station. WRCK and WFRG play rock music and country music, respectively. The rates for each station were pretty much the same. Again we tried to schedule the commercials during the most popular listening times. The radio spot aired during The "Morning Drive" time from 5:30 AM to 10:00 AM each morning during the campaign. The "Afternoon Drive" time runs from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Again, the advantage to this project as opposed to a "normal" PSA is that we could select the airing times.

The radio and television announcements were intended to recruit students. The enclosed print advertisements were produced to recruit tutors and to encourage referrals by friends and family members of the non-readers in our service area. The theme remained the same, "Life is Too Important for Guessing Games", written below the unreadable sign on the bridge overpass. The rates for newspaper advertising in our area vary a lot. The attitude toward non-profit organizations varies just as much. Organizations can never afford to run an ad in the Utica Observer-Dispatch because of the expense ($399.00 for the enclosed sample) and we usually are lucky to get a 2-line announcement of upcoming workshops, despite repeated efforts on our part to provide an "angle" for a story, as editors have suggested at media workshops. Other newspapers in our area are much more cooperative, and the rates more reasonable. This, however, again provided us with the opportunity to choose the dates of the advertisements, rather than depending on the newspapers to include us on a slow day. The newspaper campaign coincided with the radio and television commercials, which were planned around upcoming tutor training workshop schedules. Again, many of our referrals come via referrals from friends and family members, ("I'm calling for help for my husband"), so documentation is difficult. The best we can do is ask if a person has seen our advertisements or commercials, but that does not necessarily mean that was why they called.

EVALUATION

As was stated above, many referrals for reading help come second or third hand. We always noticed an increase in the number of phone calls when the advertisement blitz was running. Enclosed you will find a sample schedule for one of the time periods. During the grant period, the Literacy Department evaluated approximately 70 students. The publicity campaigns seemed to have no effect on the total number of evaluations. General publicity for the program and phone calls asking about Literacy services always increased during a publicity campaign. The long range effect may be an increase in community awareness and referrals in the future. Of course, the most positive outcome of the project was the national recognition by Literacy Volunteers of America. Despite the fact that the credit is still being contended, this is definitely the kind of publicity that the Literacy program hopes for. The radio, television, and print

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advertisements will still be used by our local media whenever we can arrange free space and time.

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Part II: Quantitative Data

Provide the following information about this project by filling in the blanks or putting a checkmark next to the answer that best describes your project. If any of the questions are not relevant to this project, write N/A.

1. What is the size of the community served by this project?

___ under 10,000
___ between 10,000 - 25,000
___ between 25,000 - 50,000
___ between 50,000 - 100,000
___ between 100,000-200,000
✓ over 200,000

2. What type of project was this? (Check as many as applicable)

✓ Recruitment
___ Retention
___ Space Renovation
___ Coalition Building
✓ Public Awareness
___ Training
___ Rural Oriented
___ Basic Literacy
___ Other (describe)_____
___ Collection Development
___ Tutoring
___ Computer Assisted
___ Other Technology
___ Employment Oriented
___ Intergenerational/Family
___ English as a Second Language (ESL)

3. Did you target a particular population? (Check as many as applicable)

___ Homeless
___ Hearing Impaired
___ Visually Impaired
___ Learning Disabled
___ Mentally Disabled
___ Workforce/Workplace
___ Inmates of Correctional Institutions
✓ Other (describe) Potential tutors and learners
___ Homebound
___ Seniors/Older Citizens
___ Migrant Workers
___ Indian Tribes
___ Intergenerational/Families
___ English as a Second Language

4. If this project involved tutoring, what tutoring method was used?

___ Laubach ___ LVA ___ Michigan Method
___ Orton-Gillingham ___ Other (describe)

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5. If this project involved tutoring, how was it provided? (check as many as applicable)

___one-on-one tutoring ___small group instruction
___classroom instruction

N/A

5.(a) If this project involved tutoring, was the learning progress of the adult literacy students quantitatively measured? ___ yes ___ no

(If "yes", identify any tests, questionnaires, or standard methods used and summarize student results.)

N/A

6.(a) If this project involved tutoring, were qualitative outcomes of student progress documented? ___ yes ___ no

(If "yes", briefly describe how progress was determined and summarize student results. You may attach samples of any documents used to record observations or demonstrate outcomes.)

N/A

7. During the course of this project were any of the following items produced? If so, attach a copy to each copy of the report.

___ bibliography
___ curriculum guide
___ training manual
✓ public relations audiovisual
___ training audiovisual
___ recruitment brochure
___ resource directory
___ evaluation report
___ survey
___ newsletter(s)
___ other (describe)
_____
_____

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3. During the course of this project:

How many adult learners were served? (i.e., individuals who made use of the library's literacy project services in some way) 500+
Of those served, how many received direct tutoring service? N/A
How many hours of direct tutoring service did they receive? N/A
How many new volunteer tutors were trained? 80
How many current volunteer tutors received additional training? _____
How many volunteer tutors (total) were involved? N/A
How many non-tutor volunteers were recruited? N/A
How many service hours were provided by non-tutors? N/A
How many librarians were oriented to literacy methods, materials, and students? N/A
How many trainers of tutors were trained? N/A

Part III: Narrative Report

Provide a narrative report that includes the following information:

1. A comparison of actual accomplishments to the goals and objectives set forth in the approved application. Describe any major changes or revisions in the program with respect to approved activities, staffing, and budgeting, including unspent funds. Explain why established goals and objectives were not met, if applicable.

2. Provide a comparison between proposed and actual expenditures by budget category, i.e., personnel, travel, materials, etc.

3. Provide, as appropriate, specific details as to the activities undertaken -- e.g., if library materials were acquired, describe the kinds of materials purchased; if a needs assessment was conducted, describe the results of the assessment; if training was provided, describe the training and include the dates and topics; if services were contracted out, describe the contractor's activities.

4. Describe the role the library has played in the accomplishment of the goals and objectives set forth in the approved grant, including whether the library was involved in the project's implementation or as a resource and site only.

5. Provide names of agencies and organizations recruited to volunteer their services for the literacy program or that were involved in the coordination and planning of the literacy program. Describe the nature of their role.

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